Oxford Learning Institute
University of Oxford

Template for a
Memorandum of Understanding between Students and Supervisors

The following template Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is just that: a template. While it has been developed to include the experimental aspects of science and biomedical science research projects, please feel free to add items or to delete inappropriate or not applicable items.

The MOU should be regarded as something to help in the planning and conduct of doctoral study. The purpose of an MOU is to make expectations explicit between supervisors and students at an early stage. Clear expectations about the responsibilities of both parties are essential to a successful supervision relationship.

If the project changes substantially, a new MOU should be drawn up. Either way, it is a good idea to revisit and update the MOU every 12 months.

Programme details:

Start date: _____   Expected submission date: _____

Supervisory meetings:

1. How often or when will the student have meetings with the supervisor(s)? Update each year.
(Suggestion: a formal meeting, irrespective of the number of informal meetings, at least 3 times per term)

2. Who will take responsibility to arrange a new time for missed meetings?

3. What kind of support or assistance can students expect in meetings?

4. Will the student present a written progress report before supervisory meetings? How many days in advance?

5. Will the student present a written summary of what is agreed to in meetings? How many days after the meeting?

6. How will the student access the supervisor(s) for unscheduled meetings or advice?

Expected progress:

7. When will the student provide a written proposal and give a seminar on the proposal?

8. How many hours per week is the student expected to spend in the lab or field and on the project as a whole? Indicate breakdown into literature searching/reading, draft writing, data collection and data analysis. Update each year.

    Lab/field: Literature: Analysis: Writing: Total:

Resources available:

9. Where will the research be conducted and at what times of the day/week/year is access to space and equipment normally available? Who books the equipment, if necessary?

Adapted from Otago University
Research Supervision @ Oxford

10. Where will the student have personal bench space or a desk?

11. Is the student expected to attend departmental seminars or other departmental activities? (*Give details of the latter*)

12. Can the student expect to attend/present at national or international conferences? (*Give details*)

13. What additional teaching, demonstrating and skills development opportunities will the student have?

14. What additional non-DPhil studies or part-time employment can the student have?

Data collection and analysis:

15. Outline briefly the amount and type of data expected for the thesis (including sample size, tests or analyses).

16. What are the approximate dates for completion of lab/field work or other data collection?

17. What will be the role of the supervisor in obtaining and analysing the data each year?
    (Examples: initial training; continuing active assistance; passive supervision. Update each year)

18. Who will write the first draft of the application for human or animal ethical approval? When will the application be submitted?

Writing and feedback:

19. Indicate the approximate dates of submission of the first drafts of the Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results and Discussion sections of the thesis or each chapter. Update each year.

20. How many drafts of each section of the thesis will the supervisor(s) review? How quickly can the student expect feedback?

21. When preparing the data for publication, who will write the first draft of the manuscript, who will be corresponding author and what will be the order of the authors?

Signatures   Date

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____